As COVID-19 cases and deaths climbed in Maryland, Governor Larry Hogan issued an order at the end of March 2020 asking all residents to stay home unless they were engaged in essential work. The next morning, thousands of doctors, nurses, and other health care workers reported, as always, to Maryland hospitals—placing their own lives, and the lives of their families, at risk to care for Marylanders. The fight continues to this day.
The dedication of Maryland hospital caregivers has never abated, even when COVID cases surged and supply chains were strained past their limits. And the pandemic continues.

The taller the challenge, the deeper the commitment of our hospitals and health systems to excel in caring for Maryland. Healing happens every day, in every way, in Maryland’s teaching, community, and specialty hospitals. Children and parents beating cancer. Grandparents surviving strokes and restoring function. Babies born healthy, with bright futures. Accident victims helped to walk again. Psychiatric and substance use disorder patients gaining independence. And now, thousands of COVID victims recovering from a disease unimagined just months ago.

Our health care heroes brighten the lives of Maryland families every day. Please honor their commitment and contributions. Make sensible policy and legislative choices to support Maryland hospitals and health care heroes.

Maryland hospitals invite Congress and the Administration to be our partners in achieving this goal.
We Urge Congress and the Administration to:

Ensure the Success of Maryland’s Unique Model

For more than 40 years Maryland hospitals have operated under an all-payer regulated pricing system. In 2014, all acute care hospitals also became subject to global revenue budgets set by the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission. The Maryland Model is run as a demonstration contract between the State and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The Model safeguards patients’ access to hospital services, supports revenue predictability, and promotes health equity for all Marylanders. In the most recent demonstration period, Maryland hospitals saved Medicare $1.4 billion while improving quality and efficiency of care. Our new model contract, which began January 2019, keeps Maryland on the leading edge of care transformation. We encourage you to ensure our residents have the best possible health care.

Secure **federal protections** to maintain the Maryland Model and comprehensive health care coverage if the Affordable Care Act is overturned or hobbled.

Limit volatility and prevent undue rises in cost of care due to the **COVID-19 pandemic** through appropriate funding and policy support.

Empower Maryland providers to share accountability for achieving the model’s goals through participation in federal **alternative payment models**.
It is said one’s ZIP code is a better predictor of health than one’s genetic code.

Social and environmental factors do matter. Maryland hospitals work with care partners and community groups to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people, such as by putting primary care into underserved neighborhoods.

Your backing is crucial to help hospitals overcome rising threats to good health. We urge you to support a vibrant strategy to make people healthier.

Support vulnerable rural and urban communities by promoting strategies to address social determinants of health and testing care delivery innovations.

Remove restrictions on reimbursement to create parity for services appropriately delivered via telehealth; invest to get to 100% broadband connectivity.

Ensure patients and providers can access vital drug therapies by establishing fair and sustainable drug pricing and protecting the 340B drug savings program.
We Urge Congress and the Administration to:

Foster a Robust and Inclusive Health Care Workforce

The core mission of our hospitals and health systems is caring for people.

To fulfill that aim, hospitals and health systems need teams of compassionate, skilled and dedicated professionals, serving both at the hospital and in the community. We encourage you to enable a strong health care workforce.

- Strengthen the health care workforce by supporting the recruitment and retention of physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals across the continuum.

- Help shield hospital workers by enhancing liability protections and investing in emergency stockpiles of protective supplies and equipment.

- Promote health workforce diversity and cultural competency through federal aid to minority-serving institutions and training programs to eliminate bias in patient care.
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